

Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness

LIFESTYLE IMPACTS RELATIONAL HEALTH

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Monday, July 26, 2021

[Psalm 39:5-7](#); [Ecclesiastes 1:1-7](#);

[Ecclesiastes 1:14](#); [Psalm 90:12](#)

STUDY & REFLECTION

As we delve deeper into the study of the power and importance of Relational health, we must face some basic issues and ask ourselves why Relational health is not more common. What is it that keeps us from and prevents us from enjoying enriching, edifying, nurturing relationships, if that is what God intended and intends for us to have? Why is it that even among Christians, such relationships are often rare and uncommon? The answers of course are found in the Word of God. All of life's issues can be explained and remedied if we have the courage and will to place our lives under the microscope of God's Word and with open eyes see the Why and What of our lives.

As we study our devotional readings, they began to unfold for us and presents to us, one of the primary reasons for Relational unhealthiness.....even among the people of God. **OUR CHAOTIC LIFESTYLE!!**

Psa 39:5-7 in The Living Bible translation says, "all of our busy rushing ends in nothing!" The wisdom of Solomon declares in Eccl chapter 1 "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity (with no purpose, lacking value or significance) all things men do are meaningless!"

How depressing.....How sad.....Too often How True!

How would you describe our Lifestyle? Describe how we live in this culture? What words describe the nature and quality of our lifestyle? Busy...Hectic...Chaotic.... Hurried.... Rat Race!

A pastoral colleague of mine, Randy Frazee wrote a book dealing with the Toxicity of our Lifestyle called [MAKING ROOM FOR LIFE: TRADING CHAOTIC LIFESTYLES FOR CONNECTING RELATIONSHIPS.](#)

Let's face it. It is unreasonable for us to think we can create and maintain Healthy Relationships without the indispensable resource that God has given us...**TIME.**

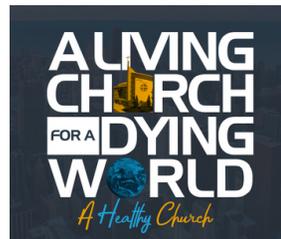
ACTION ITEMS

What is your lifestyle....how you spend your time, has a direct relationship regarding the existence and quality of your relationships. Your assignment: write in your journal or on a piece of paper the three things that are Most Important in your life. Be honest.

Next, describe with hourly time elements attached, how you spend a typical day.

Don't fudge and don't modify. Share what you have written with your small group. Share together what you discover and how it relates to Relational Health Wellness and Wholeness.

INVOLVING OTHERS



Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness

THE STRESS ANXIETY HURRY-BUSY SYNDROME

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Matthew 6:25-32; Luke 21:19

STUDY & REFLECTION

We focus today on words that unfortunately describe the conditions of our lives, simply in the living of them: *Stress* is the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure. Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. Stress is your body's response to anything that requires attention or action. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. Stress can cause bodily or mental tension and be a factor in causing or enhancing disease. *Anxiety* is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness. It might cause you to sweat, feel restless and tense, and have a rapid heartbeat. It can be a normal reaction to stress. These feelings can often become excessive, all consuming and interfere with normal life. *Busyness* is the common lifestyle of our time, where there is always a lot to do and often a feeling of too little time, energy, and other resources to do it

We have never lived in an atmosphere like today's society of stress, anxiety, busyness, and *hurriedness*. Much of life feels like we are going 100 mph, but getting nowhere. Someone described it like running on a hamster's wheel, a life of motion without meaning or accomplishment.

In our devotional scriptures, Jesus warns us of the stresses and strains that can easily be a part of and seemingly overwhelm everyday life. He warns us that we can feel so overburdened with so many things that life loses its zest, its value. So much so that it can feel like a prison, with no escape.

ACTION ITEMS

Assess the level of stress, anxiety, strain that you are experiencing in your life.

- What do you see as the underlying causes that contribute to it?
- To what degree is this level of stress and strain negatively impacting your important relationships?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Over the past year or so, we have deliberately been targeting the feelings of shame and stigma that many of us as Christians feel about how the stress of life impacts us. Discuss where you are individually in your group and listen to others in your group. *Be prepared to minister to each other, allowing support and focused ministry to take place.*

OUR CHAOTIC LIFESTYLES INHIBIT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Psalm 90:12

STUDY & REFLECTION

Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should. (TLB)
How do we spend our days? How do you spend your days? Are we making wise, healthy choices of how we spend the time God gives us? Would you say that the way you are spending most of your days result in a life that is rich, nurturing, and fulfilling? Or are you like most of us....caught up in the Rat-Race of life. Most of us are caught up in the Rat-Race, but have conveniently forgotten that in the maze of the Rat-Race, the rat doesn't figure it out... the *rat dies!!*

I assure you, the chaotic lifestyle characterized by the rat-race **is not the life God has for us**. Let me use a quote from Randy Frazee's book. He says, the problem is that in trying to live life as proscribed by this world's culture, we are "SQUEEZING LIVING OUT OF LIFE!"

We seem to be always running around trying to get to the next thing or event. We have little or no time to cultivate meaningful friendships or nourishing relationships. Even in our families we are rarely together, sharing meaningful time. We are too busy doing life that we seem to always be going somewhere but never really reaching a restful destination. Our lives are being wasted in busyness. We have become so busy that we are feeding a toxic disease Frazee calls *Crowded Loneliness*. We are living in a crowded world, but are in reality unconnected, not receiving from each other the touch, nurturing and love that God placed in us in creation, as a need

WE WERE CREATED TO LIVE IN GENUINE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS.

ACTION ITEMS

Think about the script of an average day in the life that most of us live. We are almost always running around trying to get to the next thing. How hectic is your typical day? When do you get up in the morning? Do you have restful sleep? What about devotional time? What interaction do you have getting ready for the day? Do you have family? What is the quality of the interchange with them as you prepare? Do you have breakfast together? How do you get to work? Do you share the commute with others? When is work over? What happens after work? Do you share meals with others?

Write out a typical day. Look and see when, where, how, do meaningful relationships occur?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Share the experience and details of your action item with your small group. Are they similar? If there are times of relationship building, discuss them and share how they affect your life.

STUDY & REFLECTION

As we acknowledge the hurried, unfulfilling, chaotic lifestyles that most of us are living, we must ask the question:

WHY ARE WE LIVING LIKE THIS? IS IT PAYING OFF?

In many cases, being transparent and honest, we too often feel like we have to live like this, at this pace! Isn't everyone living like this? Isn't this simply putting forth the effort to achieve and excel? We have been led to believe that if we want a good life, we must put in as much work as we can. How else can we afford the amenities that we all want? We feel that the chaos is temporary, and will result in being able to relax and enjoy the finer things of life. Is this the truth? NO!

Let's hear and understand what Jesus said: *What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?* MATT 16:26 (NIV)

Wait a minute. Could Jesus be warning us that when we keep trying to squeeze so much and so many 'things' into life, we could actually be contributing to losing life...losing that which God has gifted us with that makes us unique and special. Could the price be that we are slowly but surely losing our own (unique) souls!? Stuffing so many things into a life that is already being strained may in fact be crowding out the important things that the Lord desires for us in life.

Jesus in Luke 12 is even more emphatic. Note The English Translation: *And he went on to say to them all, "Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because a person's true life is not made up of the things he owns, no matter how rich he may be."*

The truth is, the outcome of our hurried, hyper-crowded schedules, endless activities, unbelievable responsibilities, rushing too and fro, rarely pays off. Even when we get what we think we must have, reach our goals, achieve our expectations, our lives are rarely enriched and more fulfilling. Maybe we have allowed this world and its greed for more, to deceive us into believing in something false, and in fact squeezing Life out of Living.

ACTION ITEMS

Let's start **Making Room for life**. After some inward reflection and prayer, name two things, relationships, conditions, that you want most in life. You will discover that these things reveal our true vision for life and should give us new priorities for living, prioritizing our time and making life richer and more fulfilling.

INVOLVING OTHERS

Make the time to sharing your heart with others and listening to theirs. This alone will move you toward better and healthier Relationships.

STUDY & REFLECTION

Both of our devotional scriptures addresses the importance of relationships and points us to **the importance of prioritizing focused, critical relationships**. We are suffering today with over-stimulation and sensory overload. I have often expressed an observation that we live in the most 'connected, yet disconnected' society ever. Because of the awesome development of communication technology, we are able to reach and interact to literally the entire world. Social media has grown and developed in such a way that we can have hundreds, thousands, even millions of 'friends,' that we have never met. We also have the capacity to friend or unfriend people at a moment's notice. This often leads to an exaggerated accumulation of superficial relationships. Let's ask the critical question. How well do we 'know' these 'friends?' In addition, we have so many who we are somehow 'connected' to but have little ability or capacity to develop any meaningful knowledge of who they really are. Are these relationships mutually nourishing? Do they add value to each other's life?

Having so many people in our circles, give us little chance to get to know others beyond superficial, short-lived, interactions. **The result is that we often have many acquaintances and few genuine friends.** This too often contributes to us being spread so thin, that it is easy for us to take for granted those who should be closest to us, beginning with our families.

Scripture points us to proper prioritizing relationships by commanding us to relate to God, as our first and most important relationship, and then to others. The passage in Deuteronomy directs us to know and connect with God first, and *to share that most vital relationship with our children (the next generation) on a consistent daily basis.*

A genuine Relationship, requires us to get to 'know,' a person. The key word for this in scripture is 'fellowship,' the Greek word *koinonia*. To have 'fellowship,' means to hold things in common. It means to communicate with and by spending time together, developing community and in the spiritual sense sharing the Lord's table...communion. As we see this connection repeatedly emphasized in scripture we begin to understand that it is not an activity that we are instructed to have with others but in every sense of the word, fellowship rightly understood is a Relationship!

ACTION ITEMS

Who are the critical relationships in your life? How do you demonstrate the importance of your Relationship with God? Name the other critical relationships in your life and indicate by quality of time spent, how important they are. What are some of the relationships that you have that after proper consideration should be ended or at the very least modified?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Discuss with your small group, the importance of designating what relationships are important in our lives. Have the courage to identify how some of the relationships we have are toxic and need eliminating.

Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness REVIEW

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Saturday, July 31, 2021
Choose 1 or two from this week

STUDY & REFLECTION

Instead of trying to review all the scriptures for this week, identify 1 or 2 that were most meaningful for you. That's right **SIMPLIFY!!**
PRIORITIZE!! FOCUS!!

ACTION ITEMS

Perhaps you realize that an area of understanding was revealed that requires that you spend more time focusing on it.
DO IT!

INVOLVING OTHERS

Take time and share with others what has impacted you and what you mean to do about it.